



BS

2825

.S65



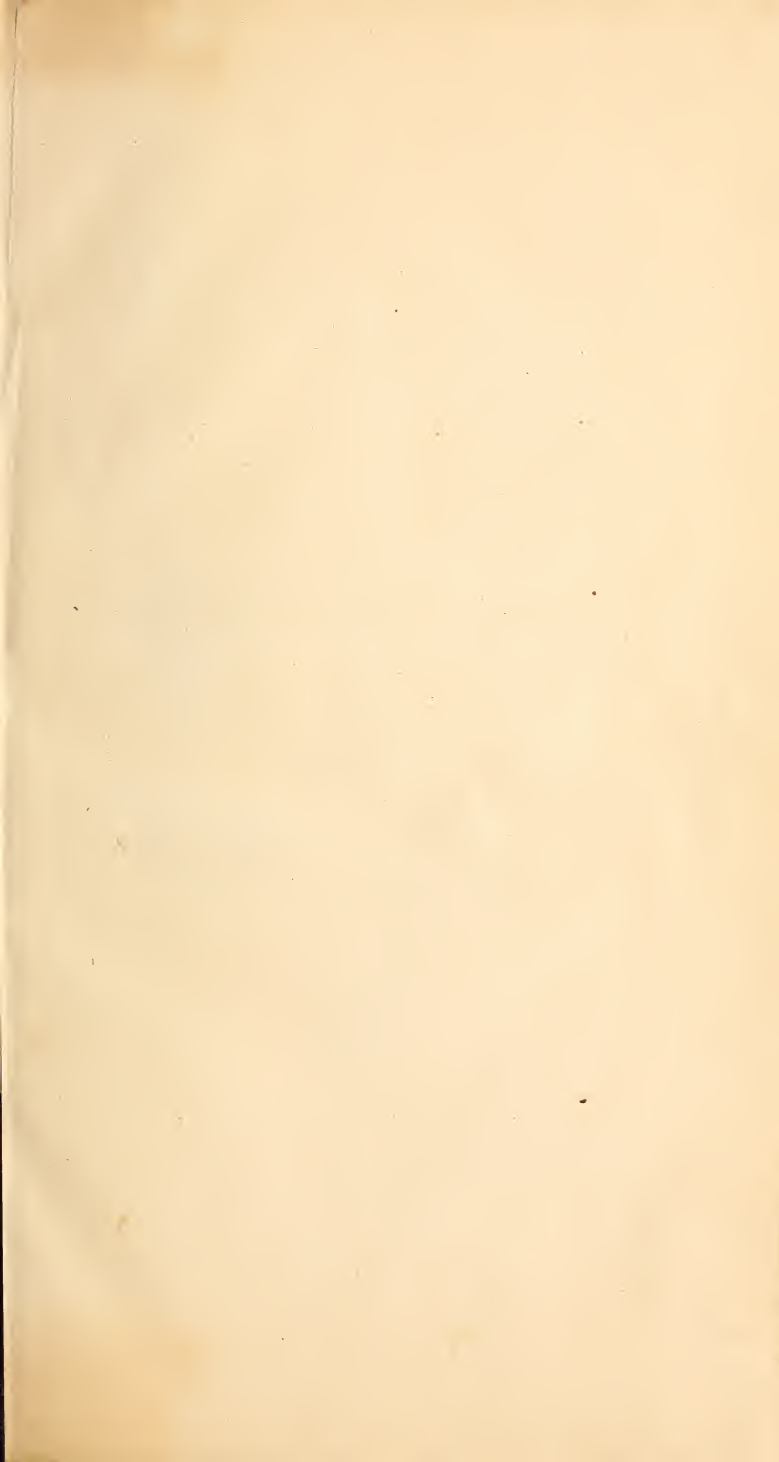
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

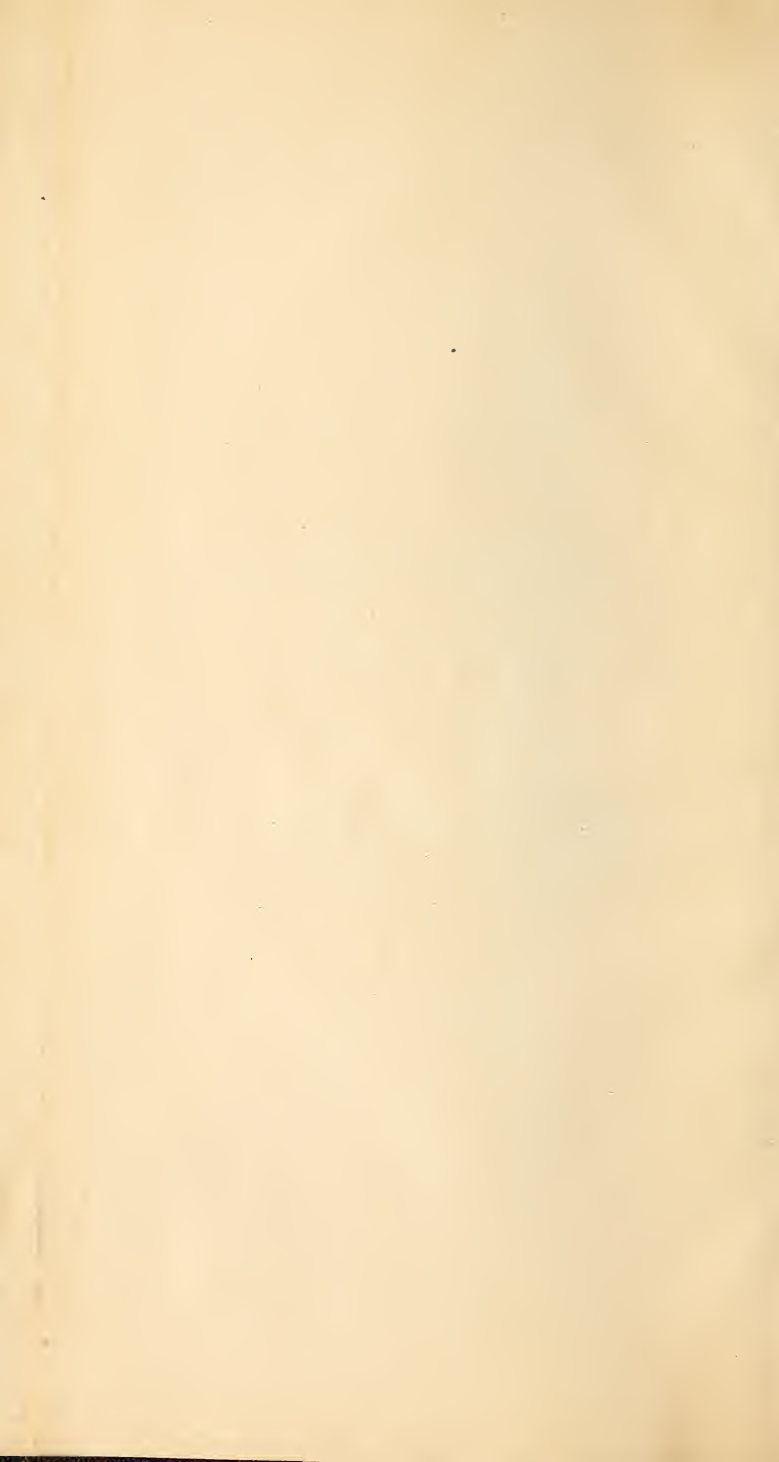
[FORCE COLLECTION.]

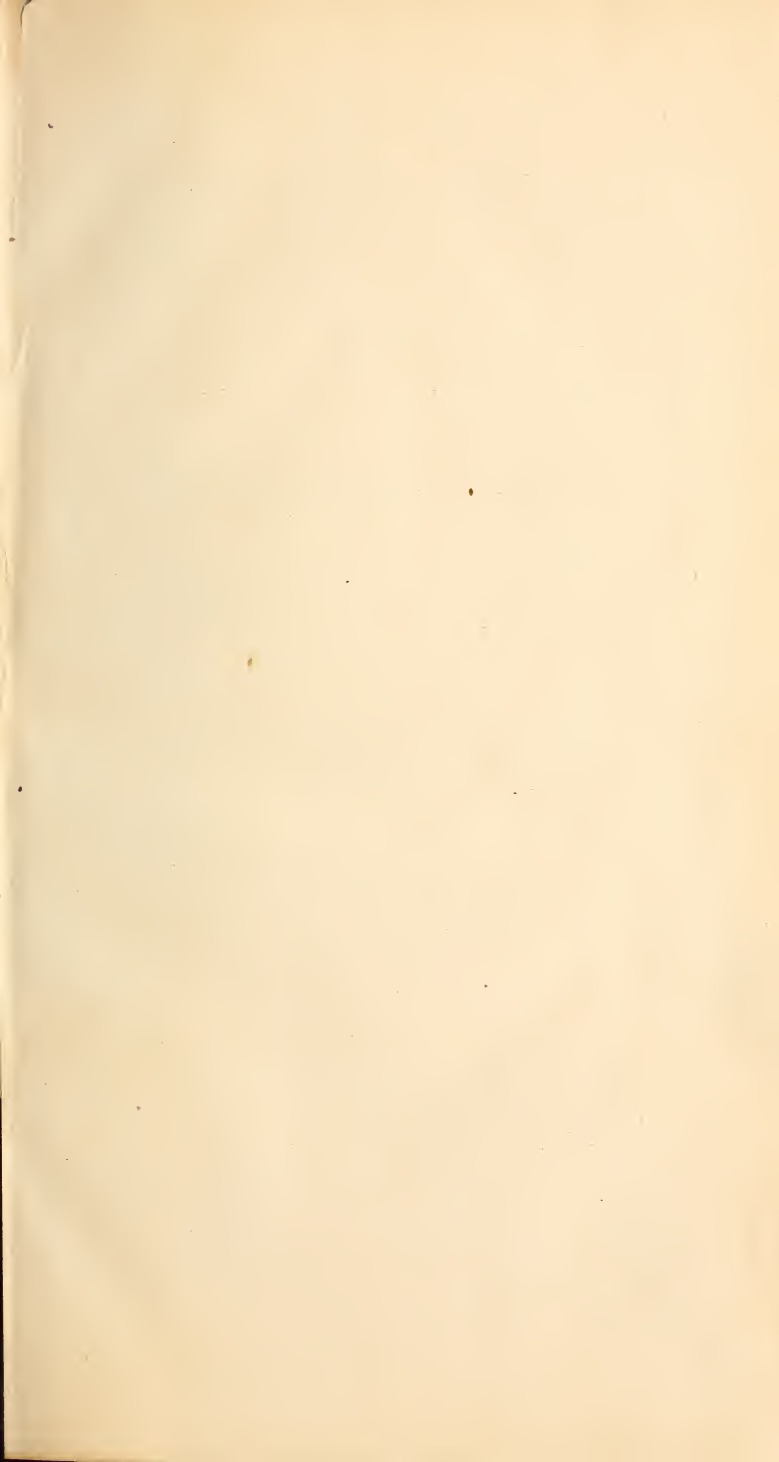
Chap. B5 28 25

Shelf 13, 5 65

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.









AN EXPLANATION
OF THE
APOCALYPSE,

OR

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

BY ALEXANDER SMYTH.

WASHINGTON CITY:

WAY & GIDEON,

Printers.

.....
1825.

Library of Congress
1867
City of Washington.

BS2825
565

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, to wit:

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the twenty-fifth day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the forty-ninth, ALEXANDER SMYTH, of the said district, hath deposited in the office of the Clerk of the District Court for the District of Columbia, the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as author, in the words following, to wit:

"An Explanation of the Apocalypse, or Revelation of St. John.—By ALEXANDER SMYTH."

In conformity to the act of the congress of the United States, entitled "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of MAPS, CHARTS, and BOOKS, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned," and also to the act, entitled "An act supplementary to an act, entitled 'An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of MAPS, CHARTS, and BOOKS, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned,' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other PRINTS."

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, (L. S.) and affixed the public seal of my office, the day and year aforesaid.

EDM. I. LEE,
Clerk of the District Court for the District of Columbia.

MVG 13M-40

THE APOCALYPSE.

THE important question respecting the book of The Revelation of St. John the divine, is, whether is it a prophetic vision of future events, or an artful enigmatical relation of past events, under the form of prophecy.

Let us first examine, by what early writers of the church this book has been quoted or referred to. The learned Lardner says, "It is *very probable* that Hermas had read the book of St. John's Revelation, and imitated it; he has many things resembling it." This conclusion is drawn from the resemblance alone; from which I draw one entirely different. Hermas wrote after all the apostles were dead, and probably about the

year 100. Instead of the splendid city, the new Jerusalem, he has a great square tower, built with bright square stones, which are the saints. The work of Hermas is persuasive evidence that the Apocalypse was not written before his time; for although there is, in some particulars, a resemblance, yet the machinery of Hermas is so far inferior to that of the Apocalypse, that we must believe that the work of Hermas was first written; as in architecture the hut preceded the palace. A man of fertile imagination, with the visions of Hermas before him, might produce the Apocalypse; but it is not probable, that a writer with the Apocalypse before him, and imitating it, should produce such a work as the pastor of Hermas.

Doctor Lardner says, "I think it also *highly probable* that Papias had read

the book of Revelation.” There is no evidence making this probable. Papias was bishop of Hierapolis in Asia from 110 to 116 A. C., and introduced the opinion of the Millenarians; (*a*) he wrote a work entitled “An explication of the oracles of the Lord;” but he has left nothing to show that he ever saw the Apocalypse.

Justin Martyr, who composed an apology for the Christians, and suffered death about the year 167, says, “And a man among us by name John, one of the apostles of Christ, in the revelation made to him, has prophesied *the believers* in our Christ shall live a thousand years in Jerusalem; and after that shall be the general, and in a word, the eternal resurrection, and judgment of all men to-

a Lardner.

gether." This indeed resembles that passage in the Apocalypse which says that, *the martyrs* lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years, and that the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. Justin may have seen some of the Apocalypses from which that which we now have was in part compiled; but I cannot agree that he ever saw the Apocalypse, in the form in which it now appears.

Polycarp, who suffered death about the year 166, in his works, quotes and refers to Matthew, Luke, The Acts, and ten of the Epistles; but he never mentions The Revelation. He wrote on the resurrection, and the last judgment; and he uses this expression, "Do we not know that the saints shall judge the world, as Paul teaches?"(b) If Polycarp

b 1 Col. 6. 2.

had known such a book as The Revelation of St. John the divine, and considered it as the work of John the apostle, he would, most assuredly, have quoted it when writing on such subjects; and had the work existed in his time, it must have been known to him; as he was for many years bishop of Smyrna, one of the seven churches.

Marcion, 144, received ten of the epistles of Paul; but he never mentioned the Apocalypse. Tatian, 172, received the gospels, and several of Paul's epistles; but he never mentioned the Apocalypse. Theodotus of Byzantium, 187, mentioned the books of John, Matthew, Luke, The Acts, and the epistles to Timothy, the Romans, the Galatians, and the Corinthians; but he said nothing of the Apocalypse.

Athenægoras of Alexandria, who, about 177 or 180, wrote an apology for the Christians, speaks of a general opinion among them, that at the time of the resurrection, "the earth shall deliver up her dead;" but in writing a discourse of the resurrection of the dead, he never quotes or refers to the Apocalypse; a strong presumptive proof that no such work was known to him.

The Apocalypse is not mentioned in the writings of Theophilus bishop of Antioch, 181. Eusebius indeed has said that, Theophilus in a book against Her-mogenes, brought proof from the Apocalypse; but Eusebius is a writer of doubtful credit; and this unsupported hearsay testimony of his, is unsatisfactory. Theophilus says that the evil dæ-mon does not cease to accuse; "this dæ-mon is also called the dragon." This

may have furnished a hint to the writer of the Apocalypse.

Ireneus, bishop of Lyons in Gaul, who is supposed to have died in 202, speaks of the Apocalypse, and says, "It was seen no long time ago, but almost in our age, at the end of the reign of Domitian." In the fragments left by him, which are only found extant in a barbarous latin version, is this passage ;* "As also John in the Revelation says, The incense is the prayers of the saints." (c)

It is said that Praxeas, from 194 to 207, argued from the Revelation, first chapter and eighth verse, "I am Alpha and Omega, &c."

Caius, a presbyter of Rome, from 210 to 217, as we are told by Eusebius,

* Lardner doubts whether this passage be genuine.

c Rev. 8. 8.

writes thus; "And Cerinthus also, (who by his Revelations, as if written by some great apostle, imposes upon us monstrous relations of things of his own invention, as shown to him by an angel,) says that, after the resurrection, there shall be a terrestrial kingdom of Christ, and that men shall live again in Jerusalem, subject to sensual desires and pleasures; ** and he says there will be a thousand years spent in nuptial entertainments." This shows that Caius had read the book of The Revelation, and considered it a forgery by Cerinthus.

Clement of Alexandria, 192 to 217, refers to the passage which constitutes the twenty-first verse of the twenty-first chapter of the Revelation, as the words of an apostle; and he writes thus; "Such a one, though here upon earth he be not honoured with the first seat, shall sit

upon the four and twenty thrones, judging the people, as John says in the Revelation.” Although this is no correct quotation, it shews that the Apocalypse was known to Clement.

Tertulian, 195 to 220, says, “John in his Apocalypse is commanded to correct those who eat things sacrificed to Idols, and commit fornication.”(*d*) Again he says, “The apostle John in the Apocalypse, describes a sharp two edged sword, coming out of the mouth of God.”(*e*)

Dionysius of Alexandria, 230 to 265, has criticised the Apocalypse. He contends that the manner, style, structure, sentiments, diction, and construction, plainly distinguish this work from the writings of the apostle John.

d Rev. 2. 20.

e Rev. 1. 16.

It appears therefore, that the Apocalypse was not in being in the time of Polycarp, 166; and that it was in being before the death of Ireneus in 202. This work condemns the sect of Nicolaitans; and Nicolaus, the founder of that sect, was of the second century.

The writer of the Apocalypse has addressed the churches of Pergamos, Thyatira,* Sardis, Philadelphia, Smyrna, Ephesus, and Laodicea; all those cities were situated in Asia minor, in a space not more extensive than eighty miles from north to south by one hundred and eighty miles from east to west;† he does not address any church in Europe, Af-

* It is admitted by Epiphanius and Grotius, that there was no Christian church at Thyatira in the time of St. John.

† These cities were all situated in a tract of country, a little larger than New-Jersey.

rica, Palestine, or Syria. The writer had probably dwelt in Asia minor, and perhaps in one of those cities in which were the seven churches addressed.

If, with some of the fathers, we suppose this book not to be genuine,* we may look for the author about the time when the work first appeared; and for the events pretended to have been foretold, in the history of the preceding age.

The contents of the historical part of the Apocalypse, may be stated thus:

CHAP. 6. *The reign of Commodus, and his death.*

CHAP. 8. *Heresies in the time of Commodus.*

CHAP. 9. *The same subject continued.*

* It was rejected by the council of Laodicea in 363.

CHAP. 11. *The fall of Pertinax and Didius.*

CHAP. 12. *Septimius Severus, his wife, and eldest son.*

CHAP. 13. *Albinus, his statues, medals, and coins.*

CHAP. 14. *Caracalla, the army of Severus, and the punishment of the prætorian guards.*

CHAP. 16. *Civil war between Severus and Niger.*

CHAP. 17. *The city of Byzantium, and the emperor Niger.*

CHAP. 18. *Byzantium taken and destroyed.*

CHAP. 19. *Caracalla, and the defeat of Albinus at Lyons.*

I will now proceed to give a more particular explanation of this book.

CHAP. 2. The writer speaks of the synagogue of satan at Smyrna, and of

satan's throne at Pergamos. At those two cities were the principal temples of Æsculapius, which God was supposed to appear in the form of a serpent.

“Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach, and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things offered to idols.” Perhaps this is Maximilla,* one of the prophetesses of Montanus, who in 171, commenced the propagation of his heresy in Phrygia, adjacent to Thyatira.† Maximilla is said to have lived until the year 218.

* Pope Victor gave to Prisca and Maximilla, a letter of peace to the churches of Asia, which he afterwards revoked.

† Or it may be Philumene, the inspired virgin, who was the companion of Appelles, 188, whose place of residence I have not found mentioned in church history.

“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” I presume that Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who suffered death about the year 166, is the angel to whom this is addressed.

CHAP. 3. Melito, bishop of Sardis, is the angel of that church. He is said to have been a eunuch; and there seems to be an allusion to his emasculation. “Thou hast a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same will I clothe in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name from the book of life.”*

CHAP. 6. “And I saw, and behold a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow.” This is Commodus,† who

* Compare with Isaiah, 55. 4, 5.

† Commodus, whose character is known to

took great delight in shooting with a bow, and gave astonishing proofs of his dexterity and skill; he would shoot off the head of an ostrich when running at its utmost speed; and he would kill a panther that had seized a man, before it had time to hurt him. He erected statues to himself through all the city of Rome; and one of them, which stood opposite to the senate house, held a bent bow.

“ And he went forth conquering and to conquer.” Commodus fought as a gladiator seven hundred and thirty-five times, and used to subscribe himself,

the reader of history, is the first emperor that a christian writer of the second century would mount on a *white* horse; his favorite concubine Marcia, (who was little less than empress,) was a Christian; and, by her influence, protected the Christians.

“The conqueror of a thousand gladiators.”

“Another horse red; and it was given to him who sat thereon to take peace from the land, and that men might kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.” This is Maternus, a deserter, who in 187, collected the bands of deserters and robbers into a little army, set open the prisons, invited the slaves to assert their freedom, plundered many cities of Spain and Gaul, and was near effecting a design formed by him, to murder Commodus, and usurp the throne.

“A black horse, and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.** A quart of wheat for a bit.”* This is

* The *chaenix* contained near three half pints; the *denarius* was equal to seven pence and three farthings sterling; it was the price

Cleander, a freed man of Commodus, who governed him, and amassed immense wealth. By a monopoly of corn, he produced a famine in 188, which occasioned an insurrection of the people, which was appeased with his head.

“ A pale horse, and his name that sat on him was death, and the grave followed with him; and power was given him to slay, on the fourth part of the earth, with sword, and with famine, and with pestilence, and with the wild beasts of the earth.” A plague broke out at Rome in 187, and continued until 191. It was so fatal in 189, that two thousand citizens of Rome died daily. What is said of wild beasts, may allude to a game law of Commodus, which prohibited a day's labour; so that a bushel of wheat must have cost the price of more than forty days labour.

vided that no one should kill a lion, even in his own defence. In consequence thereof, the African lions infested the villages and cultivated lands, preying on mankind with impunity.

“ And I beheld when he opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.” An earthquake is a revolution, civil war, or other great commotion. The sun black like sackcloth, is Commodus murdered; and the moon like blood, is Marcia, who caused him to be murdered.

“ The stars of Heaven fell unto the earth even as a fig-tree casteth its untimely figs, when it is shaken by a mighty wind.” Pertinax, who succeeded to the empire, sold the slaves of Commodus, among whom were three

hundred beautiful women, and as many boys.

“And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together.” Pertinax sold all the apparatus of luxury of his predecessor; the statues, pictures, rich furniture of the palace, gold and silver plate, horses and carriages. The vile ministers of the pleasures of Commodus were sought out, condemned, and their estates forfeited; some of which exceeded the estates of the richest senators.

CHAP. 8. “A great mountain, burning with fire, was cast into the sea.” I suppose that the seven trumpets relate to the church. The great mountain is, I presume, Montanus, who propagated his heresy in 171, for the suppression of which, the council of Hierapolis was held in 173, without effect.

“There fell a great star from Heaven, burning as it were a lamp,** and the name of the star is called, Wormwood.” This blazing star may be Tattian,* a disciple of Justin Martyr, and one of the most learned men of his age. He is called *Ἀψυθός*, which may signify without pleasure, or without drinking, from his doctrines, which were of the most austere kind.

The fourth trump, on the sounding of which, the third part of the sun, moon, stars, day and night, were darkened, may signify the excommunication by pope Victor, of the churches of Asia, on occasion of the controversy re-

* Possibly this star may be Theodotus the tanner of Byzantium, who was excommunicated by pope Victor. Theodotus is said by Eusebius, to have been the first who maintained the Arian opinions.

specting the proper time of keeping Easter.

CHAP. 9. "I saw a star *fallen** from Heaven unto the earth, and to him was given the key of the pit of hell," *Φρεατος της αβυσσου*. This star who had fallen from Heaven, is Tatian. He first propagated his doctrines in 172, and is said to have been the founder of the sect of Encratites. The locusts are the Encratites, who rejected wine even in the ceremony of the eucharist, abstained from marriage, professed continence, rejected all the comforts and conveniences of life, and macerated their bodies by fasting. That sect took its name from *Εγκρατες*, continent, or temperate, which sounds something like *Ακριδες*, locusts.

* I here follow the translation of Thompson.

The sixth trumpet may relate to the Ophites, or Serpentinians, a sect sprung from the Gnostics, whose leader was one Euphrates, who flourished in the latter end of the second century.*

CHAP. 11. The two martyrs are, Lætus the prætorian prefect, and Marcia the Christian concubine of Commodus, who were the chief authors of his death, and were murdered by order of the emperor Didius, a few days before he himself suffered the same fate. The Lord† of the earth, before whom those martyrs stand, is Commodus.

* The four angels bound in Euphrates, may be Appelles, Potitus, Basilicus, and Cyneros, leaders in 190, of the Marcionites.

† Mill refers to thirteen ancient copies, wherein we read *Κυριου* Lord, and not *Θεου* God, as in our copy; to wit, Alexandrian, Stephens α, ιε, Baroc. Petav. 2. Covel. 2.

“If any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.” Commodus had determined to put Lætus and Marcia to death; but they anticipated him; and Didius, who put them to death, was soon afterwards slain.

“And *a tenth* of the city fell.” I am doubtful whether this can signify the death of Pertinax, who, being governor of the city of Rome, was made emperor on the death of Commodus, and, after an excellent reign of eighty-seven days, was murdered by the prætorian guards. In his name we find the Roman numerals I, and X; one, ten; it

Sinai. Vulgate, Syriac, Arabic, Victorine, Hippolytus, and Arethas. The edition published by Roberts in 1729, with a liberal translation, reads *Κυρίον*. The passage in Zechariah, from which this expression is borrowed, reads, in the Septuagint, *Κυρίον*.

is to be recollected that we are examining an enigma.

“ And in the earthquake were slain *names of men* seven thousand.” Here we have another revolution. The writer seems to have regarded the death of Didius as only an incident of the revolution occasioned by the death of Pertinax. In the name of Didius, we find the Roman numerals VII, and DD; that is, seven, a thousand. The time is come “ to destroy (or despoil) those who destroy (or corrupt) the earth.” This threatens the prætorian guards.

CHAP. 12. “ A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” This is Julia Domna, daughter of the priest of the sun at Emessa in Syria, whom Septimius Severus married, be-

cause the astrologers affirmed that the stars had promised her a crown.

“A great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.” This is Septimius Severus.

“And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron.” This is Caracalla.

“And her child was caught up to God and his throne.” History informs us, that Evodus, a freed man of Severus,* having been charged with the

* Severus was at first favorable to the Christians; and is said to have allowed an apartment in the palace to Proculus Torpacio, a Christian physician, who had cured him of a disease by anointing him with oil. Severus is therefore represented as cast out of Heaven, while two of his opponents ascend from hell, and one (Albinus) from the sea, because he happened to be in Britain.

education of Caracalla, gave him a Christian woman for his nurse.

“He persecuted the woman that brought forth the male child.” Severus was jealous of his wife Julia; in consequence of which, she, either from a consciousness of guilt, or from a desire of safety, withdrew from public affairs, and occupied her time with literary pursuits. She is therefore said to be nourished “from the face of the serpent.”*

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus.” Severus made war against Syria in 194, for supporting

* The serpent, to whom the ancients ascribed great subtlety, was a fit emblem of the crafty, false, and cruel Severus.

Niger; he also made a war, of little importance, against the Jews in 198, on account of their attachment to Niger; and in 201, he forbade, under severe penalties, any one to join the Jews or Christians.

CHAP. 13. "I saw a wild beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns, ten crowns." This is Albinus, one of those who contended with Severus for the Roman empire. He is described as being like a leopard; this indicates a variegated character; and such was that of Albinus, of whom it is said that, notwithstanding his many vices, he was a man of great courage and skill in military affairs, and commonly called a second Cataline. The feet of a bear, indicate a rude and brutal character; and it is said of Albinus, that he was stern,

reserved, morose, and rigid to cruelty. The mouth of a lion, may indicate a voracious appetite; and it is said of Albinus, that he would eat at a breakfast, 500 figs, 100 peaches, 10 melons, 20 bunches of grapes, 100 small birds, and 400 oysters.*

“And the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority.”

Albinus commanded the Roman legions in Britain, at the time of the death of Commodus, and so was in a situation to have contended with Severus for the

* The truth of this assertion, made by Capitolinus, has been questioned; but I consider what is said by the writer of the Apocalypse, as corroborating it. The Roman emperor Maximin, is said to have eaten 60lbs. of flesh daily. We read of a Mr. Mariot, the Cormorant, or great eater of Gray's Inn, about the year 1650, who eat 12lbs. of meat daily.

empire, immediately on the death of Pertinax; but Severus craftily declared him Cæsar; and therefore is said to have given him his power, and his throne, and great authority.

“And I saw one of his heads as it were slain to death; and his deadly wound was healed.” A premature report of the death of Commodus having been spread in Britain, Albinus proposed to restore the republican government; by which Commodus being exasperated, he sent Junius Severus to take command in Britain; but that officer did not arrive before the death of Commodus was known in that country.

“And the whole earth followed this beast with admiration.” It is said by the writer of the life of Albinus, that no prince was ever so much beloved by the senate as he; the soldiers whom he com-

manded were much attached to him; and he was universally esteemed by the people of Rome.

“ And power was given him to continue forty-two months.” Albinus continued in power, as Cæsar under Severus, from June 193, until December, 196,* when he was declared a public enemy.

“ No man might buy or sell, save he

* Caracalla was declared Cæsar by the army of Severus, at Viminacium on the Danube, on the return of Severus from the east in 196, and Albinus was declared a public enemy at the same time. It was probably in December, as Severus is said to have marched through snows and frosts, as he advanced to Gaul. It was at the games of the circus, a little before the Saturnalia, that is, about the middle of December, that the people of Rome manifested their great concern at the preparation for another civil-war.

that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Severus, in June 193, caused several medals to be struck with the name of Albinus, statues to be erected to him, and money to be coined with his image impressed thereon. No man could buy or sell without money.

"His number is 666." The name of Decimus Clodius Albinus, written in Greek, contains this number.*

CHAP. 14. "And I looked, and lo, a

* Δ	ε	κ	ι	μ	ο	ν	}	666.
4,	5,	20,	10,	40,	70,	50,		
Κ	λ	ο	δ	ι	ο	ν		
20,	30,	70,	4,	10,	70,	50,		
Α	λ	β	ι	ν	ο	ν	}	
1,	30,	2,	10,	50,	70,	50,		

Twenty-one letters in the name of Albinus, give the exact number. This is the proof required by the writer, that his enigma is solved. There can be no mistake. "The interpretation is sure."

LAMB stood on Mount Zion, and with him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having his name, and his father's name, written on their foreheads." This *lamb* is Caracalla, whom this writer represents as the Messiah. The one hundred and forty-four thousand, are the soldiers of Severus.*

"And the wine-press was trodden without the city; and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of sixteen hundred furlongs." After the death of Pertinax, Severus marched with his army to Rome, artfully drew out the traitorous prætorian guards, who had murdered that excellent prince, and sold the empire; he surrounded them

* Historians say that Severus commanded one hundred and fifty thousand men at the battle of Lyons.

with his troops; reproached them for their perfidy and cowardice; dismissed them from the service with ignominy; despoiled them of their horses, military dress, and ornaments; and banished them, on pain of death, one hundred miles from Rome; that is, from a space sixteen hundred furlongs in diameter. The wine press is the prætorian camp without the city, out of which came the men and the price of blood, “even to the horse-bridles.”*

CHAP. 16. This chapter I suppose to relate to the events of the war between Severus and Niger. Armageddon, עִרְמֹנֶן, may signify, The enemy of precious things, and may be Byzantium.

“And there was a great earthquake.”

* He who wears a golden crown, and reaps the harvest of the earth, is Caracalla; he who reaps the grapes of vengeance, is Severus.

This is the civil war between Severus and Niger. "And the great city was divided into three parts." This may be Rome, or the empire, divided into parties for Severus, Albinus, and Niger. "And the cities of the Heathen fell." These are the Asiatic cities, severely punished by Severus for adhering to Niger. "And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." This signifies the destruction of the principal men who adhered to Niger. Severus put to death those senators who served as generals and tribunes under Niger; other senators of his party, were banished to the islands, and their estates confiscated.

"And there fell upon men great hail, like talent weights, out of Heaven." The army of Severus besieged Byzantium; the defenders of the city had

provided machines, which hurled large beams and stones on the besiegers, when they came near to the walls, and others which threw showers of darts and smaller stones, when the enemy were at a greater distance.

CHAP. 17. "I saw a woman sit upon a crimson beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." This beast is different from the lion mouthed beast of the 13th chapter; *that* beast is like a leopard, (spotted;) *this* is a crimson beast; *that* has, on his heads, a name of blasphemy; *this* is full of names of blasphemy; *that* has ten crowns on his horns; *this* has no crowns. This beast is Niger; and the woman who sits upon him, is Byzantium. We have here a vision of Byzantium previous to the death of Niger.

"And I saw the woman drunk with

the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." The Christians of Byzantium had been persecuted during the reign of Marcus Aurelius. In speaking of the fall of that city, Cæcilius Capella, who is supposed to have been governor of Thrace, said, "Christians, you have reason to rejoice."(*f*) And so they did.(*g*)

"The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth." Constantinople, as well as Rome, is built on seven hills. Byzantium only occupied a part of them. The ten horns, who are ten kings which have received

(*f*) Lardner.

(*g*) "Rejoice over her, O Heaven! and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.** And again they said, Hallelujah! and her smoke rose up forever and ever."

no kingdom as yet, but are about to take power as kings one hour with the beast, are probably senators exercising authority under Niger.

CHAP. 18. "It is fallen! Babylon the great is fallen; and has become the habitation of dæmons, and the *prison*, φυλακη, of every unclean spirit, and the *cage*, φυλακη, of every unclean and odious bird." This is Byzantium, closely besieged by the army of Severus, after the fall of Niger, and therefore called a prison.

"She saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow." Byzantium was then by far the greatest city of Thrace; exceeding populous and wealthy; fortified with strong walls, which were defended by many towers. The expression, "I am no widow," probably has

reference to the recent death of the emperor Niger.

“Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burnt with fire.” The siege of Byzantium by the forces of Severus, is one of the most memorable in history, for the perseverance, valor, and skill of the besieged. At the end of three years, famine compelled them to open their gates; the magistrates and soldiers were put to the sword; the estates of the inhabitants were confiscated, and they themselves were sold for slaves; the city, with its stately theatres, baths, and public buildings, was laid in ashes; the walls were levelled with the ground; and thus the chief bulwark of the empire, against the northern Barbarians was destroyed.

“And every one *sailing to the place*,* both mariners and traffickers by sea, stood afar off, and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, “What city was like this great city?” This proves that the city mystically called Babylon, was a maritime city.

“And a mighty angel took up a stone, like a great mill-stone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall Babylon, that great city, be dashed down, and shall be found no more.” Byzantium was so completely destroyed, that it lay in ruins many years after the death of Severus. The city was indeed “dashed down with violence;” yet the writer proved a false prophet. The

* I here follow Thompson, who says that he followed the Alexandrian, and other ancient manuscripts.

city was "found" again, and became, in the reign of Constantine, the capitol of the Roman empire.

The fall of the mystical Babylon, is, UNQUESTIONABLY, the destruction of Byzantium by the forces of Severus, in the year 195; and this event is the beacon which we must keep in view, while searching for the other events, enigmatically related in this book.

CHAP. 19. "And I saw Heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat on him was called *A believer* πιστος, and *Sincere* Αληθινος." This is Caracalla; and the time of this appearance is, the last of the year 196, or the beginning of 197, after he was declared Cæsar by the army on the Danube.

"And he had a name written that no man knew but he himself." This name of Caracalla is, *Christian*. Spartian

says of him, that at seven years of age, when he heard that a boy, his play-fellow, had been severely beaten, because he was of Jewish religion, he would not, for some while after, look upon his own father, nor the father of the boy, nor those who had beaten him. Lardner says that, by the Jewish religion, very probably is here meant the Christian. As his preceptor had procured for him a Christian nurse, he was no doubt instructed in the Christian belief.

“And his name is called the *Logos* of God.” The writer seems to have intended to represent Caracalla as the Messiah, the Lamb, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah. (*h*)

(*h*) Rev. 5, 5. and chap. 1, 7. “Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see

“ And he hath on his cloak and on his thigh, a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.” Saint Jerom says that the Jewish ephod was made in the form of a caracalla, or monkish dress; then the caracalla was in the form of the Jewish ephod, and was a monkish dress; and from such a dress the son of Severus took the name of Caracalla.* He is

him; *even they which pierced him*; and all the tribes of the earth shall wail because of him.” This is Caracalla, who had the title of commander in the trifling war against the Jews in 198.

* But at what age did Caracalla assume this dress? In the figure of a medal of Caracalla, when a boy, in one of Crevier’s plates, we read M. AVR. ANT. CARACALLA CAES. PONT. that is, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Caracalla Cæsar Pontifex. This medal, if genuine, must have been struck after he was declared Cæsar, in 196, and before he was de-

therefore said to have the name of God inscribed on his cloak ; because it was a Jewish ephod, or monk's dress. The same name was inscribed, it is said, "on his thigh ;" but the *thigh* is sometimes written for another member ; (*i*) and I suspect that Caracalla was circumcised.*

clared Augustus, in 198 ; and according to its testimony, he was then a priest, and called Caracalla.

(*i*) Gen. 46. 26.

* Julia Domna, the mother of Caracalla, was daughter of Bassianus, priest of the God El-agabalus, who was represented by a pyramidal stone, and was, as I apprehend, the same with the Molek of the Jews. We read that Bassianus, (grandson of Julia Maesa, the sister of Julia Domna), who was priest of the same deity, and became emperor by the name of Heliogabalus, abstained from swine's flesh, and was circumcised in honor of his God. It is very probable that the first Bassianus was

“And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.” This beast is Albinus; the kings of the earth are the governors and chiefs of Gaul and Spain, who aided Albinus.

also circumcised. And if this rite had been performed on the first and third Bassianus, we may presume that, by the procurement of his mother, it had been performed on the second Bassianus, who is Caracalla. Alexander Severus, another grandson of Julia Maesa, had a statue of Abraham in his Chapel. His mother, Julia Mamaea, is said to have been a Christian; and Heliogabalus, it is affirmed, was desirous of uniting the rites of Christianity to the worship of his God Elagabalus. I therefore presume, that this Syrian family, of “kings from the rising of the sun,” (ch. 16. 12.) were degenerated Jews, and Judaizing Christians;

“ And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet.” Some historians write that Albinus, being mortally wounded, was brought to Severus, and expired in his presence. The false prophet, supposed to be the same with the two horned beast, may be the governor of Lyonese Gaul, whose name I have not discovered.

“ And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat on the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth.” The

and that Caracalla had been circumcised. But perhaps his nurse, or preceptor, had marked him on his thigh with the name of Jesus. The Pagans marked themselves with what they called *stigmata*, to distinguish to what divinity they were consecrated. In the plates of the work *Le antique explique*, we see figures of the *Athletes Hetrusques*, with names or inscriptions passing down the thigh and leg.

battle of Lyons was fought on the 19th of February, 197; Caracalla was not nine years old until the 4th of April; yet he is said to have urged his father to put to death all the children of their enemies; and Severus did so. (*j*)

“And all the fowls were filled with their flesh.” Three hundred thousand men fought in the battle of Lyons;* the

(*j*) When we compare the sanguinary and cruel contest for the imperial throne, between Severus, Didius, Niger, and Albinus, with the calm and rational contest for the presidential chair, between Jackson, Clay, Crawford, and Adams, truly we have cause to rejoice.

* Gibbon, deeming the armies too large, has reduced them one half; but the estimate made by the writer of the Apocalypse, of the army of Severus at 144 thousand, confirms the testimony of those historians, who represent each of the armies as consisting of 150 thousand men.

victory was long doubtful; but finally was complete; and consequently the slaughter immense. The bodies of the senators who fell fighting for Albinus, were sought for, subjected to indignities, and left unburied.

Such are the events for which the Christians of that age sung Hallelujah! And Caracalla, who attempted to murder his father; who murdered his brother in the arms of his mother; who put to death twenty thousand persons for being his brother's friends; who massacred the people of Alexandria during a festival; and whose cruelty no rank, sex, or age escaped—he is the LAMB of the Apocalypse!

The writer says, “These sayings are faithful and true,—the things which must shortly be done,—the time is at hand.” It is therefore contrary to his

own words to look for the events pretended to have been foretold, in modern times.

This work is, in part, made up of passages from the prophets,* the talmud, the theology of the Rabbins, the pastor of Hermas, and the more ancient Apocalypses,† applied by the writer to the history of his own time.

It remains to ascertain, who was the writer of this wonderful enigma, to solve which the wisdom of mankind has been challenged; and which has remained unsolved during a period of 1625 years, although some among the ablest men

* Between 80 & 90 verses of the Apocalypse are taken from the prophets.

† There were Apocalypses of Peter, of Paul, of Adam, of Moses, of Elias, of Esdras, of St. Thomas, of St. Stephen, and one of St. John, different from that now extant.

who ever lived,* have been among the many who have given it the most profound consideration. I am of opinion that, Ireneus, bishop of Lyons,† was the

* As Sir Isaac Newton, and Grotius.

† Ireneus wrote 5 books against the heretics of his time; in his first book, he wrote an account of the heresy of Tatian. See Rev. 9. 1. He says of the Basilideans, that they make light of things offered to idols, and partake of them without scruple. See Rev. 2. 20. He wrote against Saturninus, Cerdon, the Valentini-ans, Marcionites, Cainites, Carpocratians, Marcosians, Sethians, and Ophites. He speaks of Mark, the chief of the Marcosians, as having come into Gaul, and made many converts there; and he speaks of the disciples of Mark, as having corrupted many women in the country about the Rhone.

In the epistle of the churches of Vienne and Lyons, attributed to Ireneus, written sometime after 177, and addressed to the churches of Asia, in referring to the execution of Pothi-

writer of the Apocalypse. His personal acquaintance with Niger, Albinus, Severus,* Julia Domna, and with the

nas, is this expression ; “ For he was indeed a genuine disciple of Christ, following the Lamb whithersoever he goes.” In the Revelation we read, “ These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes.” This use of a similar peculiar expression, indicates that both these productions are, probably, from the same pen. In the same epistle, are found these expressions ; “ He that is unjust let him be unjust still ;” and, “ He that is holy let him be holy still.” See Rev. 22. 11. Ireneus says that a heavy punishment awaits those who add to, or take away from the scriptures. See Rev. 22. 19. He also informs us that the Marcionians say, Jesus is Alpha and Omega.

* Severus governed Lyonese Gaul in 187; Niger at the same time commanded the Roman troops in Gaul, who were acting against Maternus; and Albinus had governed another province of that country; therefore Severus,

history of the infancy of Caracalla, who was probably born as well as nursed at Lyons, particularly qualified Ireneus to write the Apocalypse.

Ireneus was a Greek of Asia, and, in his youth, a disciple of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, one of the seven churches; he went to Rome, and from thence to Lyons, where, on the death of Pothimus in 177, he was appointed bishop in his stead; he wrote several works, and in one of them spoke of the Apocalypse. In a passage preserved by Eusebius, Ireneus says, "These things being thus, and this *number* being in all the exact and ancient copies, and they who saw John attesting the same things, and reason teaching us that the *number of the name* of the beast, according to Niger, Albinus, and Maternus were well known to Ireneus.

the computation of the Greeks, is *expressed by the letters contained in it.*"

And again he says, "We therefore will not run the hazard of affirming any thing too positively of the name of Antichrist; for if his name were to have been openly declared at this time, it would have been mentioned by him who saw the Revelation; for it was seen not long ago, but almost in our age, near the end of the reign of Domitian." In this passage Ireneus intimates that, if he thought proper, he could disclose the name which contains, by the Greek letters, the number 666.

It now appears that, although the Christian church has received The Revelation of St. John the divine as genuine, for more than sixteen centuries,* it is a *pious* forgery.

* This book was received as canonical, by

This discovery may not be pleasing to those who desire to restore the ignorance and mental debasement of the fourteenth century ; but it should gratify the friends of truth, as well as the advocates for the unbounded freedom of the human mind. It clearly appears, that priests have never possessed a holy spirit, by which they could distinguish truth from falsehood. Consequently, as saints, popes, and councils, knew not what to believe themselves, they had no right to prescribe a creed to others.

Origen 230, Cyprian 248, Novatus, 251, Commodian 270, Victorinus & Methodius 290, Arnobius & Lactantius 306, St. Athanasius 326, St. Epiphanius 368, St. Basil, Amphilocus, & St. Ephrem the Syrian 370, St. Gregory Nysson 371, St. Jerom 392, St. Augustine 395, Rufinus and the council of Carthage 397, Sulpicius Severus 401, and Pope Innocent I. in 402.

We have now discovered, that the pope is not the beast; that Rome is not the mystical Babylon; and that neither the Mahometans, nor the Protestants, are the locusts of the Apocalypse; all of which doctrines have been taught by our spiritual instructors, of divers sects.

Let the clergy expunge from the canon of faith a forged book, written in the spirit of insatiable revenge.^(k) Let not a difference of opinion in religion any longer excite discord, or cause division among us. Let us regard with marked disapprobation, those who, with exclusive zeal, inculcate anti-social principles: For belief and unbelief are equally involuntary; and as the one can deserve no censure, so the other can merit no applause.

(k) Ch. 6. 10. ch. 18. 6.

Consult the histories of Crevier, Gibbon, & Herodian, the Universal history, and Lardner's works.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE.

Chap. 1. 7. "Behold he cometh with multitudes." τῶν νεφελῶν. *Nephelon* signifies clouds ; but *nephos*, a cloud, is sometimes used to express a multitude. The writer alludes to the coming of Caracalla with a great army.

Chap. 2. 20. Marcellina, a woman of the Carpocratian sect, came to Rome in 160, and made many proselytes. She worshipped images of Jesus, Paul, Homer, and Pythagoras, and offered them incense. She may be "that woman Jezebel," if she ever dwelt at Thyatira.

Chap. 6. 8. "To kill with ρομφαία." I apprehend this writer has written *romphaia* for dart, or poniard, ch. 1. 16, ch. 2. 12. 16, ch. 19. 15, 21 ; he has written *μαχαίρα* for sword, ch. 6. 4. The empire was not afflicted by war in the reign of Commodus ; but the historian Dion, in enumerating the evils of that reign,

has joined to the plague, assassinations, committed all over the empire with poisoned darts or poniards βελονας.

Chap. 8. "Cast into the sea." Montanus, by the unanimous voice of the church, was separated from the faithful.

Chap. 9. 11. "They have a king over them," Broughton says that the Encratites acknowledged a power in the Devil, independent of God.

Chap. 12. 1. "A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet." I expect the coins, or medals of the empress Julia, will explain this passage. The moon was represented on them.

Chap. 16. The 2d verse relates to the proscription and extermination of the friends of Didius.

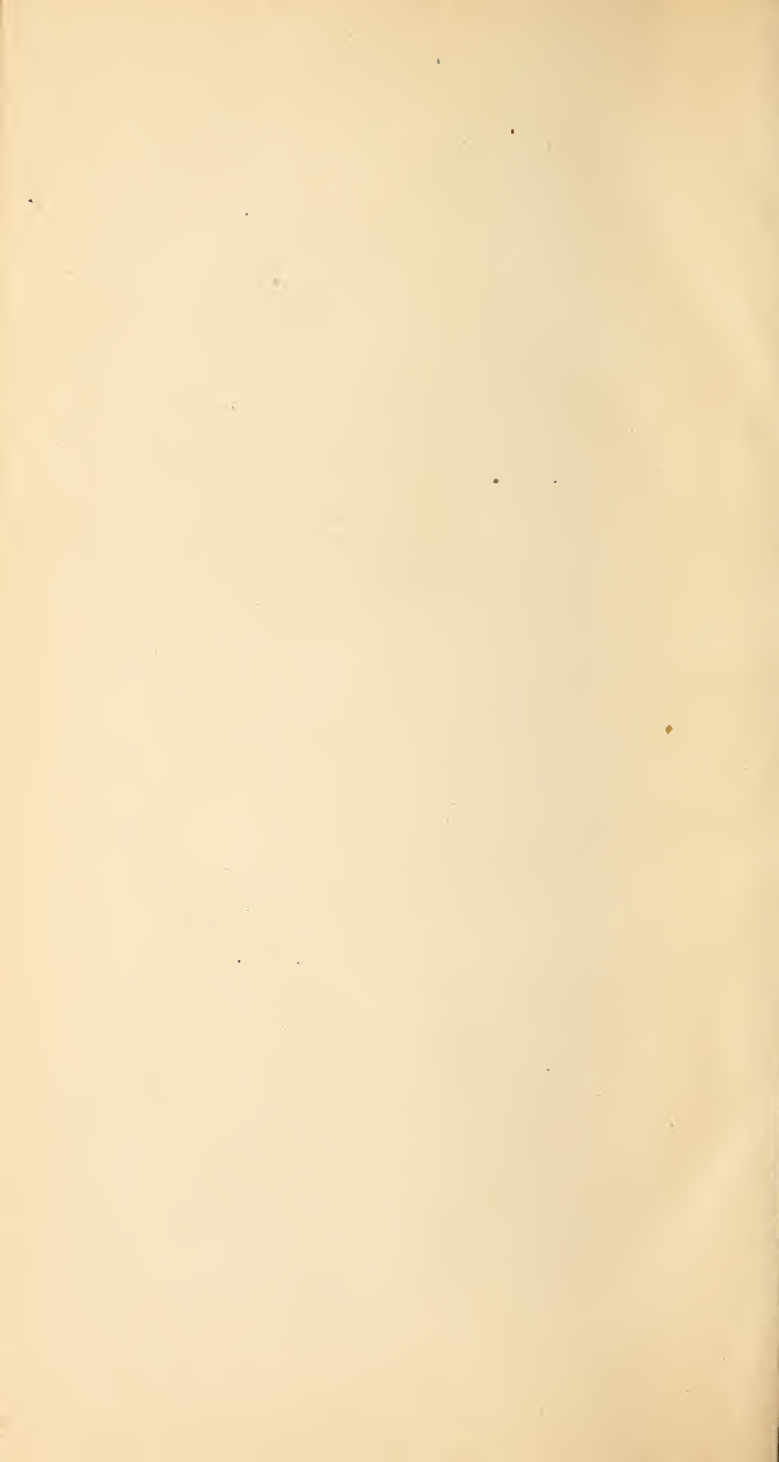
In the revolution on the death of Commodus, ch. 6. 14, "every mountain and the islands were removed out of their places." This signifies the removal by Pertinax, of the officers of Commodus. But in the revolution, on the

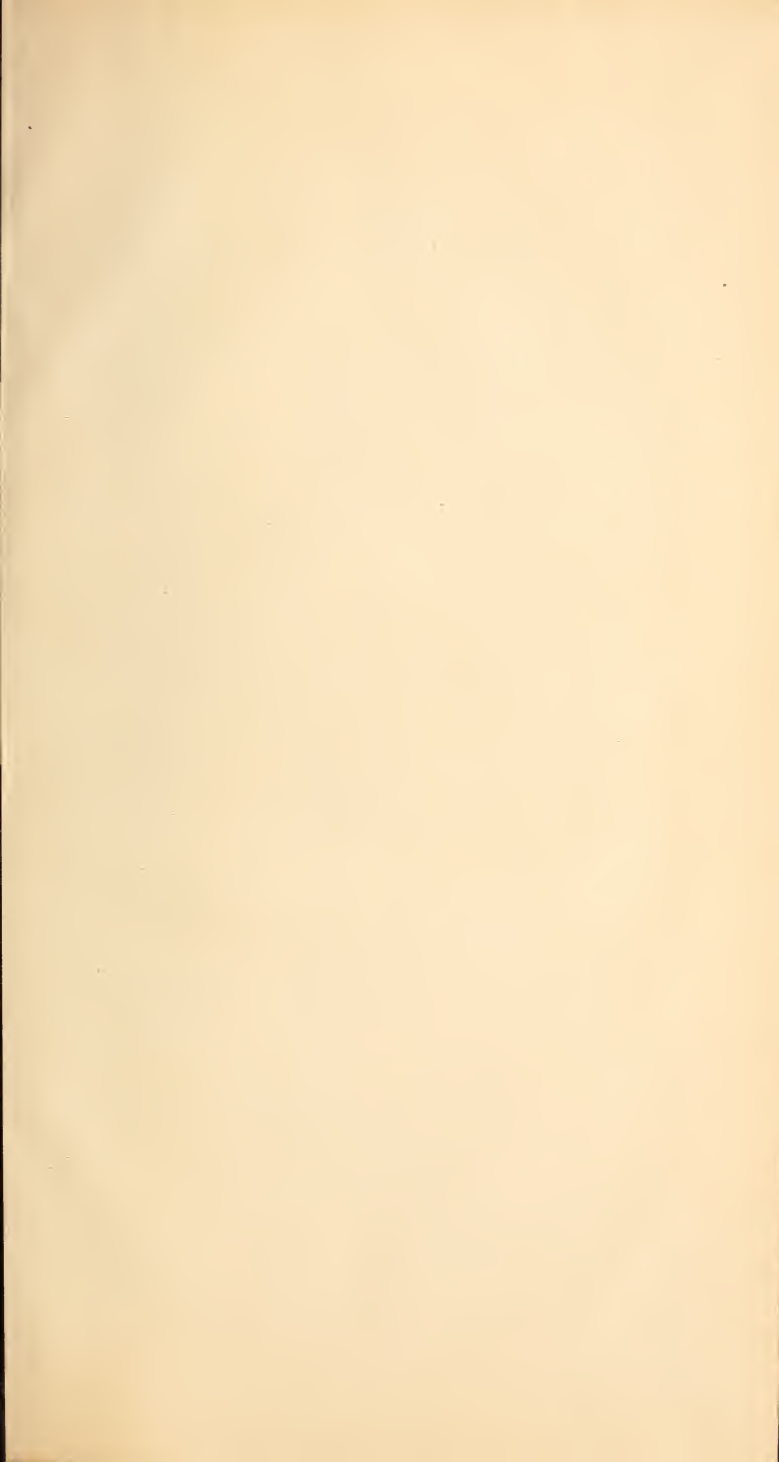
death of Niger, ch. 16, 20, "every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." This signifies the banishment or death of the officers of Niger.

Chap. 20. 4. "And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus." At Lyons in 177, those Christians who were Roman citizens, were beheaded; the others were exposed to wild beasts.











135
2825
5

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 022 012 221 9